

Agayns the lawe, agayn al equitee,
Holdeth, expres agayn the wyl of me,
My servant, which that is my thral by right,
Which fro myn hous was stole upon a nyght,
Whil that she was ful yong; this wol I prevee
By witnessse, lord, so that it nat yow grevee.
She nys his doghter nat, what so he seye;
Wherfore to yow, my lord the juge, I preye,
Yeld me my thral, if that it be youre wille.
Lo, this was al the sentence of his bille.
Virginius gan upon the chert biholde,
But hastily, er he his tale tolde,
And wolde have preveed it, as sholde a knyght,
And eek by witnessyng of many a wight,
That it was fals that seyde his adversarie,
This cursed juge wolde nothyng tarie,
Ne heere a word moore of Virginius,
But yaf his juggement, and seyde thus:
¶ I deeme anon this chert his servant have;
Thou shalt no lenger in thyn house hir save.
Go, bryng hire forth, and put hire in oure warde.
The chert shal have his thral; this I warde.
¶ And whan this worthy knyght, Virginius,
Thurgh sentence of this justice Apius,
Moste by force his deere doghter given
Unto the juge, in lecherie to lyven,
He gooth hym boon, and sette him in his halle,
And leet anon his deere doghter calle,
And, with a face deed as asschen colde,
Upon hir humble face he gan biholde,
With fadres pitee stikyng thurgh his herte,
Al wolde he from his purpos nat converte.
¶ Doghter, quod he, Virginia, by thy name,
Ther been two weyes, outhere deeth or shame,
That thou most suffre; alas! that I was bore!
For nevere thou deservedest wherfore
To dyen with a swerd, or with a knyf.
O deere doghter, endere of my lyf,
Which I have fostred up with swich plesaunce,
That thou were nevere out of my remembraunce.
O doghter, which that art my laste wo,
And in my lyf my laste joye also;
O gemme of chastitee! in pacience
Take thou thy deeth, for this is my sentence.
For love, and nat for hate, thou most be deed;
My pitous hand moot smyten of thyn heed!
Alas! that evere Apius the say!
Thus hath he falsly jugged the today.
¶ And tolde hire al the cas, as ye bifore
Han herd; nat nedeth for to telle it moore.
¶ MERCY, deere fader! quod this mayde,
And with that word she both hir armes
layde
About his nekke, as she was wont to do;
The teeris bruste out of hir eyen two,
And seyde, Goode fader, shal I dye?
Is ther no grace? is ther no remedye?
¶ No, certes, deere doghter myn, quod he.
¶ Channe yif me leysur, fader myn, quod she,
My deeth for to compleyne a litel space;
for pardee, Jeyte yaf his doghter grace
for to compleyne, er he hir slow, alas!
And God it woot, nothyng was hir trespass,

But for she ran hir fader first to see,
To welcome hym with greet solempnitee.
¶ And with that word she fil aswowne anon,
And after, whan hir swowning is agon,
She riseth up, and to hir fader sayde,
Blissed be God, that I shal dye a mayde;
Yif me my deeth, er that I have a shame;
Dooth with youre child youre wyl, a Goddes name!
¶ And with that word she preyed hym ful ofte
That with his swerd he wolde smyte softe;
And with that word aswowne down she fil.
¶ Hir fader, with ful sorweful herte and wil,
Hir heed of smoot, and by the top it hente,
And to the juge he gan it to presente,
As he sat yet in doom in consistorie.
And whan the juge it saugh, as seith the storie,
He bad to take hym and anhangen hym faste;
But right anon a thousand peple in thraste,
To save the knyght, for routhe and for pitee,
for known was the false inquitee.
The peple anon hath suspect of this thyng,
By manere of the chertes chalanging,
That it was by the assent of Apius;
They wisten wel that he was lecherus,
for which unto this Apius they gon,
And caste hym in a prisoun right anon,
Theras he slow hymself; and Claudius,
That servant was unto this Apius,
Was demed for to hange upon a tree;
But that Virginius, of his pitee,
So preyde for hym that he was exiled;
And elles, certes, he had been bigyled.
The remenant were anhangen, moore and lesse,
That were consentant of this cursednesse.

¶ HERE men may seen how synne hath his
merite.

¶ Beth war, for no man woot whom God wol
smyte
In no degree, ne in which maner wyse
The worm of conscience may agryse
Of wikked lyf, though it so pryvee be
That no man woot therof but God and he;
for be he lewed man, or ellis lered,
He noot how soone that he shal been afered.
Therefore, I rede yow, this conseil take,
forsaketh synne, er synne yow forsake.

¶ Here endeth the Phisiciens Tale.

The wordes of the Hooste to the Phisicien and the
Pardoner.

¶ HERE Hooste gan to swere
as he were wood;
Harrow! quod he, by nayles,
and by blood!
This was a fals chert and a
fals justise!
As shameful deeth as herte
may devyse
Come to this juges and
hire advocats!

Algate this sely mayde is slayn, alas!
Alas! to deere boughte she beautee!
Wherfore I seye al day, as men may see,

That yiftes of fortune and of Nature
been cause of deeth to many a creature.
¶ Here beautee was hire deth, I dar wel sayn;
Alas! so pitously as she was slayn!
Of bothe yiftes that I speke of now
Men han ful ofte moore for harm than prow.
¶ But natheles, passe over, is no fors;
I pray to God, so save thy gentil cors,
And eek thyne uryals, and thy jurdanes,
Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galianes,
And every boyste ful of thy letuarie;
God blesse hem, and oure lady Seinte Marie!
So moot I thee, thou art a propre man,
And lyk a prelat, by Seint Ronyan!
seyde I nat wel? I kan nat speke in terme;
But wel I woot, thou doost myn hert to erme,
That I almoost have caught a cardyale.
By corpus bones! but I have triacle,
Or elles a draughte of moyste and corny ale,
Or but I heere anon a myrie tale,
Myn herte is lost, for pitee of this mayde.
Thou beelamy, thou Pardoner, he sayde,
Telle us som myrthe or japes right anon!
¶ It shal be doon, quod he, by Seint Ronyan!
But first, quod he, here at this ale stake
I wol bothe drynke, and eten of a cake.
And right anon the gentilis gon to crye,
Nay! lat hym telle us of no ribaudye;
Telle us som moral thyng, that we may leere
Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly heere.
¶ I graunte, ywis, quod he, but I moot thynke
Upon som honeste thyng, while that I drynke.

¶ Here folweth the prologe of the Pardoners
Tale.

¶ Radix malorum est cupiditas. Ad Timotheum, 6.
ORDYNGES, quod he, in
chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn
speche,
And ryng it out as round as
gooth a belle,
for I kan al by rote that I telle.
My theme is alwey oon, and
evere was,
Radix malorum est cupiditas.

¶ first, I pronounce whennes that I come,
And thanne my bulles shewe I, alle and some;
Oure lige lordes seel on my patente,
That shewe I first, my body to warente,
That no man be so boold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes hooly werk;
And after that thanne telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of popes and of cardynales,
Of patriarkes and bishoppes I shewe;
And in latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with my predicacioun,
And for to stire hem to devocioun.
¶ Channe shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
Yrammed ful of cloutes and of bones;
Relikes been they, as wenen they echoon.

¶ Channe have I in latoun a sholder boon
Which that was of an hooly Jewes sheepe.
¶ GOODE men, I seye, taak of my wordes
kepe;
¶ If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxwelle
That any worm hath etc, or worm ystonge,
Taak water of that welle, and wassh his tonge,
And it is hool anon; and forthermoor,
Of pokkes, and of scabbe, and every soor,
Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle
Drynketh a draughte; taak kepe eek what I telle.
¶ If that the goode man that the beestes oweth
Wol every wyke, er that the cok hym croweth,
fastyng, drinken of this welle a draughte,
As thilke hooly Jew oure eldres taughte,
His beestes and his stoor shal multiplie.
¶ And, sires, also it heeleth jalousie;
for, though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Lat maken with this water his potage,
And nevere shal he moore his wyf mystriste,
Though he the soothe of hir defaute wiste;
Al had she taken preestes two or thre,
Heere is a miteyn eek, that ye may se;
He that his hand wol putte in this miteyn,
He shal have multiplying of his grayn,
Whan he hath sownen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offre pens, or elles grottes.
¶ Goode men & wommen, o thyng warne I yow,
If any wight be in this chirche now
That hath doon synne horrible, that he
Dar nat, for shame, of it yshryven be,
Or any womman, be she yong or old,
That hath ymaked hir housbond cokewold,
Swich folk shal have no power ne no grace
To offren to my relikes in this place;
And whoso fyndeth hym out of swich blame,
He wol come up and offre on Goddes name,
And I assoille hym by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle ygraunted was to me.
¶ BY this gaude have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner.
¶ I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is down yset,
I preche, so as ye han herd bifoore,
My telle an hundred false japes moore.
¶ Channe peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
As dooth a dowve sittynge on a berne;
Myne handes and my tonge goon so yerne,
That it is joye to se my bisynesse.
¶ Of avarice and of swich cursednesse
Is al my prechyng, for to make hem free
To geven hir pens, and namely unto me;
for myn entente is nat but for to wyne,
And nothyng for correccioun of synne.
¶ I rekke nevere, whan that they been beryed,
Though that hir soules goon ablakeberyed,
for certes, many a predicacioun
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun;
Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
To been avaunced by ypocrisie;
And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.